

108 THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

647 practically impossible since it meant rejecting your own superiors, not your job,
466 and it would be similar to someone in a household saying he was fed up when he
571 decided to leave. Thus in Kanuri cultural terms, changing a job means rejecting the
576 people with whom one works, and young men claim they would be considered in-
grates and trouble-makers if they were to attempt such a thing. Transfers, if they
are to be accomplished at all, must be done through relatives and friends who can
"visit at night" with the appropriate people and explain the ins and outs of the
case so that things can be arranged on this personal basis first before any imperson-
al bureaucratic procedures are utilized.

647 On the surface the emirate civil service looks very westernized. There are
466 offices, typewriters, clerks, officials, expense vouchers, committees, memoranda, tele-
571 phones, employee organizations, etc. However within the service, traditional pat-
576 terns of association are still very strongly observed. A man lifts the telephone and
178 traditional greetings and modes of address to a superior flow forth and color the
[177] conversation. People leave their shoes outside a superior's office, and so on. Under
these superficial cultural acts there are other things as well. "Big men" (senior
officials) have large compounds linked to a number of clients who live either in
their households or close by. Some of these subordinates have positions in the civil
service. Others form part of this big man's own group of-followers; he must be ap-
[647] proached through this group and he uses it to maintain his position and prestige in
[63] the state. It is also important to understand that the western concept of loyalty to
an ideal of public service is not widespread as yet. Top leaders are committed to
the maintenance of order in a just society that is becoming more modern. Within
the Native Authority, department loyalties are to one's superiors and personal ad-
vancement is through loyalty and generalized obedience, just as it always has been
in Kanuri society, and not to an abstract ideal of public service and bureaucratic
efficiency. This does not mean that rationalized bureaucratic behavior will not be-
come more common in Bornu. Indeed everything we know about modernization
suggests that this is inevitable. However, it does mean that at present the society is
not divided into strict sectors, one labelled modern or western, the other tradition-
al. Instead, each of these permeates the other so that everything new and modern is
shot through with traditional culture, and everything traditional has aspects of the
modern.

Representative Government

642 For most intents and purposes the political organization of the emirate is
634 carried out within the system of offices and agencies described above. However
there are today the bare bones of some other kinds of organization that are quite
634 likely to prove important in the future. During the 1950s and continuing on to the
present time, each district has had a local district council. This body is made up of
members from all over the district, sometimes the village area heads, sometimes
people appointed by them. They meet only a few times a year for one or two days
under the chairmanship of the district head and discuss local affairs. These meet-
634 ings are generally attended as well by members of the departments of local govern-
652 ment from the capital. The councils have a budget based on a small proportion of